

Election Security Subgrant Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Overview

- 1. What is the deadline for applying?** Clerks have until November 15th to return the signed MOU (request for funds). Funds will be released immediately.
- 2. Will the WEC help small municipalities get compliant?** Yes. The complete grant packet also includes a list of companies providing inexpensive IT support and hardware sales. The WEC Help Desk will also assist anyone asking for help.
- 3. Do jurisdictions have to prove they used the funds for this project?** Yes. Although the compliance form is very simple, jurisdictions are asked to provide some proof of purchase info for hardware, software, and IT support.
- 4. Is the grant \$1,200 per jurisdiction or per computer?** Per jurisdiction.
- 5. Who is considered the Authorized Jurisdiction official who will sign the MOU?** The Jurisdiction should decide who has the authority to sign the document.
- 6. Will all Jurisdictions be receiving some subgrant money?** No. Only Jurisdictions requesting assistance to meet minimum security standards for one computer outlined in the subgrant materials will receive grant funds.
- 7. How do we ask for an extension if needed after January 28, 2020?** If an extension is needed beyond January 28th, please notify the WEC as soon as you become aware of that possibility.
- 8. Will we need to annually certify compliance for the grant?** No. There is only a one-time certification required.
- 9. We are a relier with “Read Only” WisVote access. Are we eligible for grant funds?** Absolutely, jurisdictions with “read only” access will need to be in compliance with the security requirements for WisVote access and should request grant funds if needed to become complaint.
- 10. We have already upgraded our computers and IT support. Are we eligible for the grant?** Yes, you may request subgrant funds for travel expenses to attend an in-person Election Security Training if no one on your staff has attended.
- 11. Do municipalities that rely on Counties for their WisVote support be eligible for any grant money?** Yes, there are any questions about if this subgrant program applies to your jurisdiction, please give us the WEC a call.

Computers

- 12. Can I purchase a computer and IT support that costs more than \$1,200?** Yes, but \$1,200 is the maximum amount available per grant award for each municipality. The jurisdiction will have to pay for any difference.
- 13. Will we still be eligible for a grant if we just bought a new computer and IT support?** It depends. The subgrant program authorized by the Commission strictly applies to meeting baseline standards for hardware, software, and IT support. If you still need assistance to achieve baseline standards, you can ask for funds. If you already meet baseline standards, and would like funds for something else, please complete the **Advanced Security Measures** questionnaire that will be published in a separate clerk communication.
- 14. If we're allocated \$600 for a computer but find one for \$550, do we have to give the remaining \$50 back?** No. The only circumstance where we'd want the money back is if a municipality decided not to make a purchase at all. Otherwise, we expect that jurisdictions will use any remaining funds for related expenses – accessories like a power strip or extra monitor, IT support to transfer data to the new system, training time to learn the new computer, etc.
- 15. Can I ask for funds to purchase more than 1 compliant device?** No, the subgrant program permits 1 device to be purchased with the \$600 funds. If you are looking for additional computers, please complete the **Advanced Security Measures** questionnaire that will be published in a separate clerk communication.
- 16. Can I ask for funds to purchase devices for outside of my department?** No, devices purchased must be used for directly for election purposes in the clerk's office.
- 17. Do we have to purchase computers or IT support from the list provided by WEC in order to be eligible for the grant?** No. The list of potential managed service providers was provided because they can perform the required IT services remotely using an application that they will install on your computer, so you do not need someone local to you. Several of those on the list also sell computers.
- 18. Do we need to have multiple price quotes for a computer?** There is no requirement to have multiple price quotes for a computer. It's up to you if you want to have multiple price quotes.
- 19. We purchased a new computer before the Security Subgrant Program was announced. Can I use the receipt from that purchase and request grant funds?** No. The grant funds are only for jurisdictions not currently in compliance with the subgrant requirements.
- 20. Can the new computers be purchased in either 2019 or 2020?** Yes. Computers may be purchased in either year.

- 21. Should I replace a computer that is 8 years old?** Yes. A computer that is 8 years old is past the optimum life span and is more than likely utilizing an operating system of Windows 7 or earlier.
- 22. If we have already ordered a computer but have not paid for or received it, would this qualify for the grant?** Yes.
- 23. We have local IT support to meet subgrant requirements. Can we purchase a new computer from Best Buy?** Yes, you may purchase a new computer from Best Buy or any other retailer selling new computers.
- 24. Are municipalities expected to invest their own funds for any cyber security needs?**
Yes, we want the grant money to be helpful, but it will only go so far. We want each municipality to have access to at least one safe and updated computer now. Ultimately, the expectation will be that jurisdictions will be responsible for the security of their own property and will budget accordingly.

Operating System Upgrade

- 25. We will be upgrading the operating system for one computer in 2019. Is this eligible for the grant?** Yes.
- 26. We recently upgraded our operating system to Windows 10. Are we eligible for grant funds?** Yes, you may request funds for IT support for that computer as well as travel funds for in-person Election Security Training.
- 27. Can I use the funds to upgrade our operating system to Windows 10 and is it only for an upgrade to Windows 10?** Yes, you may use grant funds to update your operation system to Windows 10. However, Windows 8.1 will meet subgrant requirements for an operating system.

IT Support

- 28. Please clarify the amount available for IT support.** \$500 is available to purchase ongoing IT support for your computer.
- 29. Is the IT support grant just for an annual IT service fee?** Subgrant funds are intended to pay for IT support from a managed provider or other contracted IT services regardless of whether they are paid for annually or monthly.
- 30. We have a compliant computer and operating system with Windows Defender. Does this mean that we only qualify for funds for the training portion?** Windows Defender alone does not meet the complete requirements for IT support. You may request grant funds for both IT support and travel expenses to attend in-person security training.

- 31. My computer meets the subgrant compliance standards for WisVote. Do I still need to acquire IT support?** Yes
- 32. How do we document in the request that we're asking for funds to cover the IT services for device compliance?** They should also ask for the \$500 for IT services and they should not check that they are compliant for IT support.
- 33. What is meant by Managed IT Support? Managed IT Support means** ongoing IT support usually by a third-party manager that retains responsibility for the functionality of the device usually for a monthly fee. To meet the requirements for the WEC Election Security Subgrant funds, the IT support must provide the minimum services outlined in Appendix C III of the subgrant materials.
- 34. Can we use Subgrant funds for a compliant computer that currently has no IT support?** Yes, request subgrant funds for IT support.
- 35. Would the business we purchased our computers from that help with problems qualify as IT support?** No. The IT or managed services support should be proactive to provide services on a regular basis rather than reactive to assist in recovery if problems arise.
- 36. We already have paid for IT managed support for 2019. Can we request grant funds to pay for 2020 support and beyond?** Yes, you may request subgrant funds to meet future IT expenses.
- 37. Will general yearly maintenance qualify for "Managed IT Support"?** No. Managed IT support must be ongoing to ensure that all services are provided on a regular basis.
- 38. There is no one on the list of possible IT support providers near our jurisdiction. Where else may I find a provider?** The list of potential managed service providers was provided because they can perform the required services remotely using an application that they will install on your computer, so you do not need someone local to you.
- 39. If we are a relier, do we still need to have IT support if we accept grant funds?** Yes.
- 40. As a relier, is it necessary to have separate IT support when we already have IT support from the County?** No. Providing the County IT support provides the services outlined in Appendix C III of the subgrant materials.
- 41. Can we use the Best Buy Geek Squad for IT support?** Yes, if they can provide the services as outline in the grant. We have not specifically investigated the use of the Best Buy Geek Squad for managed IT support.
- 42. Is the subgrant funds for IT support for an immediate expense of \$500 or for a contract of listed services?** What we are looking for is a provider to ensure that the

computer configuration stays current and stays secure. We are not providing money just to call them when you need them but to ensure that the support is ongoing. What we want to avoid is having a provider on a retainer type of support arrangement that only provides services when you contact them.

- 43. Our County performs all WisVote elections work for us. Is it necessary for them to have contracted IT support or is the current County IT support adequate?** More than likely the County's IT support is adequate if it provides the required functions outlined in Appendix C III.
- 44. As a relier, is it necessary to have separate IT support when we already have IT support from the County?** No, provided the county's IT support meets the required functions outlined in Appendix C III.
- 45. We currently have and need 5 computers for WisVote work. Two need to be replaced. Since we do not qualify for grant funds to purchase a computer, can we request IT grant funds since we will need extra IT time to support those two computers? We currently have in-house IT support.** No. Subgrant funds are targeted to ensure that every jurisdiction has at least one compliant computer with IT support. Since you already meet baseline standards, and would like funds for something else, please complete the **Advanced Security Measures** questionnaire that will be published in a separate clerk communication.

Training

- 46. If a clerk attended a Tabletop Training Exercise (TTX) last year, does that count?** Yes. Past attendance will count as complying with grant standards. Please note we will not retroactively reimburse travel costs for past events.
- 47. If a clerk already completed online election security training, does that count?** Yes, but we do recommend revisiting this training on an annual basis. In-person training is still required in addition to the online training.
- 48. If I attended a TTX but still want my deputy to attend, can I request the \$100 for training expenses?** No, the election security training funds are only for jurisdictions who have not yet had anyone attend training.
- 49. If a previous clerk attended a security training, can I still receive funds?** Yes, if no one currently employed by the office has received security training, you are eligible for the grant.
- 50. Will the WEC be hosting elections security-related trainings in various regions of the state by the compliance deadline in January?** The WEC is currently in the process of coordinating with several county clerks throughout the State to host in-person Election Security TTXs. The WEC will also be leading a series of media/crisis communications webinars/in-person trainings during the weeks of November 4 and November 11 that will

meet the subgrant training requirements. The WEC will post the schedule as soon as it is finalized.

- 51. Will in-person security trainings that are necessary for subgrant compliance be published on the WEC website?** Yes, a schedule will be posted on the WEC website as soon as it is finalized.
- 52. I'm attending the November 21-22, 2019 Presidential Election Academy. Will there be an in-person security training there?** Yes, on November 22nd, the WEC will be conducting an Election Security TTX held in conjunction with the Academy.
- 53. Do we need to complete both the online training as well as the in-person security training?** Yes, both are required.

Miscellaneous

- 54. Our Town Hall has no internet access. Does this disqualify us from using grant funds?** No, this does not disqualify your jurisdiction from requesting grant funds.
- 55. Can I use funds to upgrade the version of MS Office I am using if that version is no longer supported?** No, subgrant funds are not available for software upgrades.
- 56. Our Deputy Clerk currently uses her personal computer for WisVote work from home. Is she no longer able to do this?** We are not saying that the clerk cannot work from home, however the computer that the clerk uses at home should be the one that is secure and owned by the jurisdiction. That computer will be subject to all compliance requirements and future monitoring for compliance.
- 57. Would the subgrant funds be available for a server if it is going to be non-compliant at the end of 2019?** No. the focus of the subgrant program is to ensure that each jurisdiction has at least one secure device.